

TALKING POINTS

Counselor Arlia made a few comments at the Foreign Ministry meeting on Wednesday about the government's anti-subversion fight and human rights performance. His claims and some points:

(a) Brutal human rights violations are perpetrated by the leftists:

--USG has expressed and is sympathetic to the horrendous violence and chaos perpetrated by armed terrorist groups.

--US Embassy officials count friends and colleagues among those Argentines killed by terrorist actions.

--US public not at all sympathetic with brutal armed terrorist acts, nor is it opposed to legitimate self-defense when security forces are attacked by armed terrorists in confrontations. It does question widespread arrests and detentions without charge of significant numbers of scientists, writers, journalists, churchmen, professors, some of them well known internationally, for periods of more than one year, simply on suspicion of subversive inclinations.

--GOA, however, has the force of law behind its counter-terrorist fight including laws establishing charges and punishments for terrorist and subversive activities, a civilian court system, a decree-law establishing special military courts martial for terrorist crimes. Observers question why GOA does not employ its own legal and judicial means to bring terrorist criminals to justice. Less than 50 persons have been reportedly tried in any court on subversive charges, including relatively simple cases of possession of subversive literature, in the year since military government came to power.

(b) Since October, 1976 GOA has had total monopoly of repressive force (security forces fighting terrorism) in the country.

--Reports of disappearances; kidnappings; harrassment of refugees; invasions by hooded and armed individuals into private homes to steal and abduct unarmed citizens; cases of persons who disappear and are blindfolded and interrogated and then released in streets by unnamed groups continue as before. If GOA has controlled all unauthorized anti-subversion efforts, who is responsible for these actions? Many of these incidents are reported in the local Buenos Aires press.

--Also, since GOA admits rightist terrorist excesses were taking place, why have none of those responsible been brought to trial and punished, or, if they have, why have none of the cases been publicized as a warning to similar-minded criminal elements. What happened in October 1976 to end the unauthorized out-of-control rightist terrorist actions? Why didn't GOA communicate its control of the situation to a world troubled about what was happening in Argentina?

Department of State, Office of Intelligence Policy and Research

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(c) Foreigners are getting distorted and false information on the situation in Argentina.

--GOA has not responded to criticism and attacks from abroad, even when directly consulted. For example, the list of Argentine prisoners in La Plata jail mentioned in Jack Anderson's column. Anderson is not the most respected columnist in the US, but it is true that GOA never responded to his charges by identifying the persons, stating clearly the charges against them and clarifying the judicial process pending.

--Information coming from different Argentine offices conflict, again raising doubts. One example is the case of atomic scientist Antonio Missetich--Argentine Embassy in Washington reported he was in detention and expected to be released soon; Foreign Ministry reported he was and had never been in hands of Argentine authorities, that he had simply disappeared.

--USG officials visiting and stationed in Argentina have sought official information and explanation of what is happening here. GOA officials have not been able to trace one disappearance case submitted by US Embassy.

(d) GOA publishes lists of detainees daily.

The Interior Ministry has published weekly lists of persons released from the detention under state of siege provisions and persons detained during the week under those provisions since January. It never published a list of those detained by authorities before 1977. It has been shown that many of those whose names appear as released are not actually released and families continue ignorant of their whereabouts, even if they have been turned over to the justice system for outstanding criminal charges. By the number of writs of habeas corpus appearing each day in the press (some 120 were published in press in month of March alone in 1976 and 1977 cases), it is clear many persons who are picked up or abducted or who in some way disappear are not listed as being formally detained under state of siege.

(e) War against subversion is almost won.

--If war is nearly won, as GOA officials have been claiming for at least four months now, why is there no indication that the extraordinary measures imposed to confront this unfortunate situation are being relaxed? Why is the option to leave the country, the suspension of which has been challenged in your own federal courts, not reinstated in cases of persons detained for a year or more without charge? Why aren't more people being brought to trial and the number of reported disappearances diminishing? The timetable for the virtual elimination of the terrorist threat keeps being moved up--first it was predicted as coming in mid-1977, then by the end of 1977, now officials talk about two more years. If the campaign is being successful, why is the end always further away?

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Denian Visit - August 1977

(this doc is re March 77 Denian visit)